

State Emergency Coordination Center (SECC)

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Situation Report for August 25, 2007

(issued @ 1500 hrs.)



2007 FIRES

Report Includes:

- Background Information
 - Fire Restrictions & Closures
 - Air Quality
 - Road Closures/Travel Restrictions
- Current Incident Situation
- New Large Fires
- Weather
- State Declarations
- Local & Tribal Declarations
- Local Government & Tribal Emergency Operations
- Requests for State Financial Assistance
 - Fire Management Assistance Grants
 - EMAC Resources Committed
 - Summary of State Resources Committed

Important Websites:

State of Montana Fire Information:

<http://mt.gov/fire.asp>

National Interagency Fire Center

http://www.nifc.gov/fire_info/nfn.htm

Northern Rockies Coordination Center

<http://gacc.nifc.gov/nrcc/>

Inciweb -- Incident Information System

<http://www.inciweb.org/state/27/>

Being prepared: Ready.gov

I. Background Information

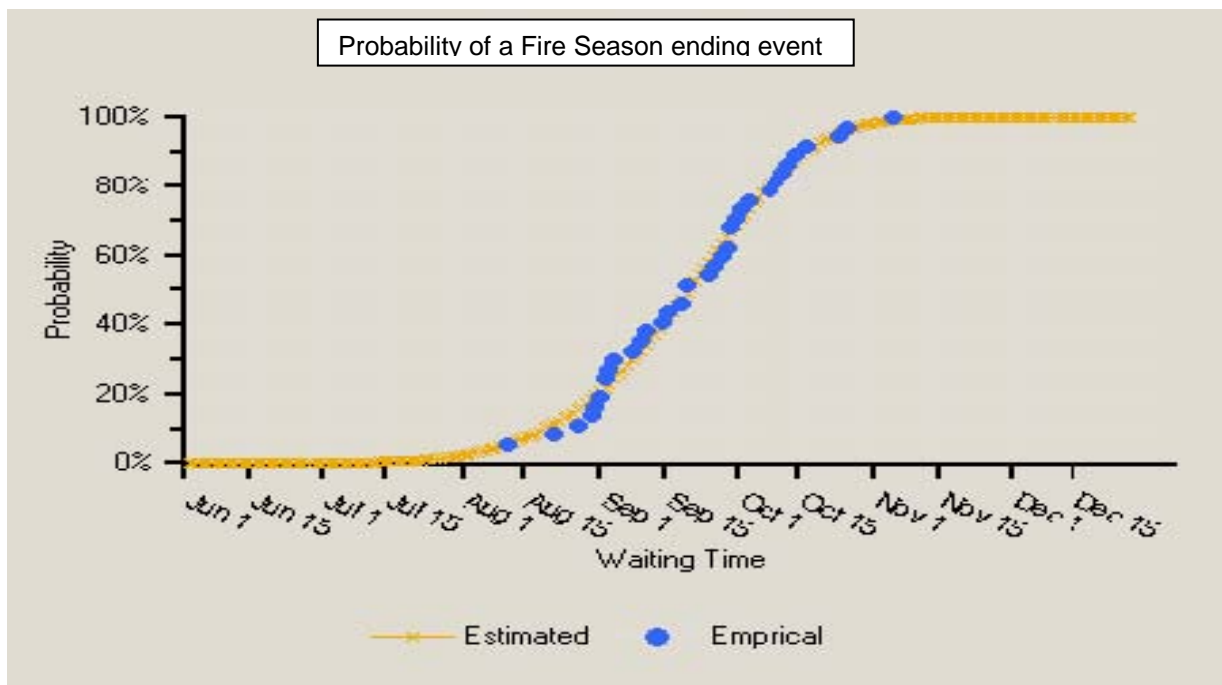
Since June, hot and dry weather has dominated the region creating very high to extreme fire conditions. Fire Indices are at an all time high while fuel moistures are low. Accompanying the high indices are weather patterns that have set the conditions for lightning and lightning caused starts. High pressure weather patterns over the region are responsible for the high temperatures and little to no moisture. Occasional cold fronts push through the region causing severe lightning storms that ignite wildfires. Rain has accompanied some of these fronts but a return to a high pressure system tends to mitigate most of the moisture received.

Long Range Predictions

Above normal significant fire potential is forecast for most of the Area during August. Fuel moisture conditions should improve during the September through November time period except for eastern Montana. In many areas across western Montana and northern Idaho, downed dead woody fuel moistures are drier than normal and Energy Release Component indices are running near or above record levels and well ahead of normal for this time of year. The Climate Prediction Center's forecast calls for above

normal temperatures and below normal precipitation during August, especially over western portions of the Area. Wind events are likely to increase during August as well. Abundant fine fuels are rapidly curing in eastern Montana and will likely increase the probability for large fire problems during August and into the fall months.

This graph below shows that, on August 22, there was statistically about a 12% chance of a season ending event. A season ending event is defined as a 1 inch of rainfall occurring in 5 days or less. The probability curve does start rising very quickly between September 1 and October 15th. This study was conducted for Powell area, just west of Lolo Pass, by Powell RD FMO Mark Wilson and LTAN/FBAN Walker Thornton.



Fire Contracting: Inquiries regarding contracting fire equipment and other fire resources should be directed to the interested party's local dispatch center or Geographic Area Coordination Center see:

<http://www.fs.fed.us/r1/fire/nrcg/agree-contract/signup.html>

Fire Restrictions & Closures: Portions of the state are currently under Stage I or Stage II Fire Restrictions. For definitions of these restrictions, see:

<http://www.mt.blm.gov/fire/restrictions/stagel.pdf>

<http://www.mt.blm.gov/fire/restrictions/stagell.pdf>

Fire Restrictions in Effect (for specific areas):

<http://www.mt.blm.gov/fire/restrictions/index.html>

Air Quality & Smoke: The Montana Department of Environmental Quality issues a daily forecast and discussion of potential smoke impacts throughout the state. The forecast can be accessed at <http://www.deq.state.mt.us/fireupdates/index.asp>.

Road Closures & Travel Restrictions:

<http://www.mdt.mt.gov/travinfo/reports/alerts.shtml>

Administrative Rules of Montana (ARM) Emergency Rules:

<http://sos.mt.gov/ARM/emergency/index.asp>

Department of Fish, Wildlife, & Parks

[Current Fire Restrictions](#)

[Drought & Fire Updates](#)

[Drought & Fire News](#)

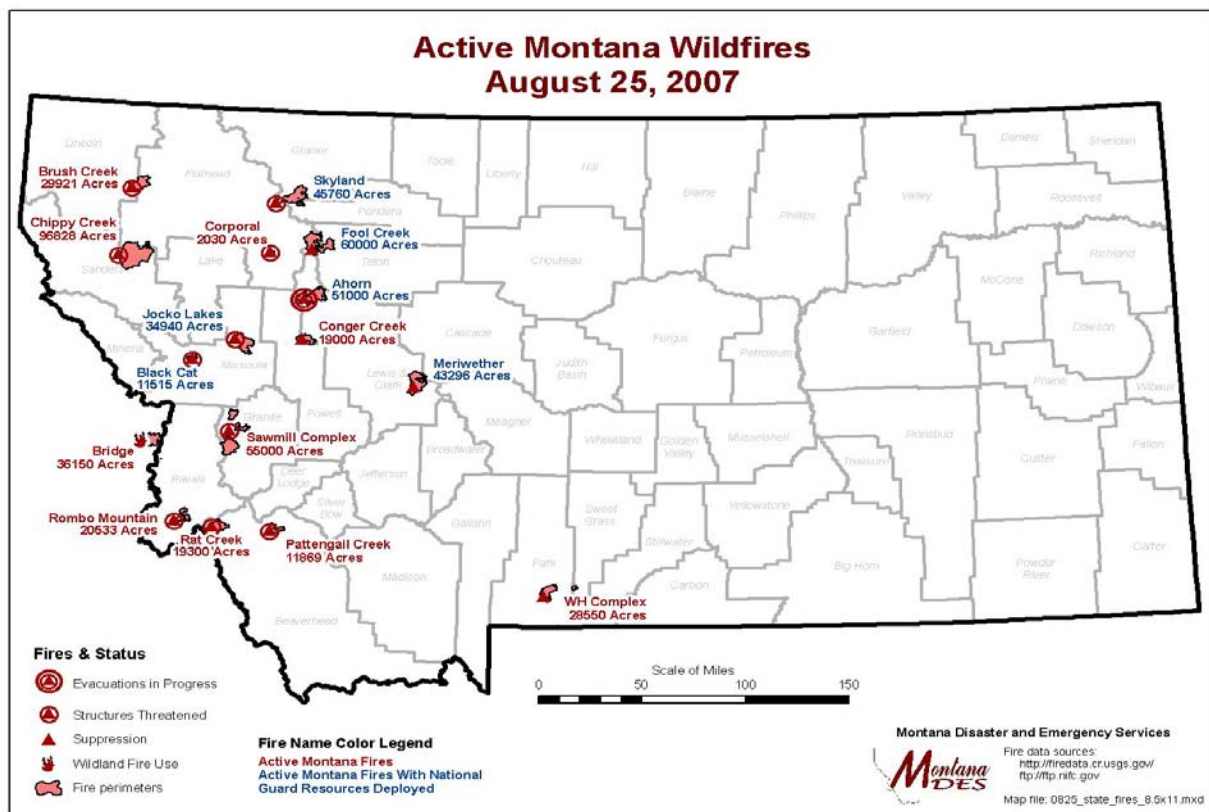
Department of Revenue

<http://mt.gov/revenue/forindividuals/taxrelieffordisaster.asp>

Department of Agriculture

<http://agr.mt.gov/crops/hayFirst.asp>

II. Current Incident Situation - Incidents listed according to current NRCG priority. (This report includes summary information for Montana fires that are currently greater than 100 acres in size. Fires are being dropped from this report once they reach 100% containment.) We have included a link to fire perimeters for the several of the incidents: http://dma.mt.gov/des/Fire_Perimeter_Maps.asp.



Currently assigned to Montana incidents are:

Area Command Teams	-	1
Type 1 IMT's	-	5
Type 2 IMT's	-	3
Fire Use Management Teams	-	3

The Area Command Team (Zimmerman) is assigned to help with incident prioritization and resources allocation for fires in Southwestern Montana. ¹ **All of these fires are included in the SW Montana Area Command.**

Black Cat ¹ is located between Highway 93 and Mill Creek, approximately 2 miles SW of Evaro, Montana. Martin's Type 1 IMT is assigned (under Unified Command with Frenchtown FD). Current size is 11,515 acres with 50% containment. Approximately 650 personnel are assigned, plus mutual aid resources from local fire departments. A total of seven (7) unoccupied structures were lost, but no primary residences were reported as destroyed. All lanes of Highway 93 are reportedly opened today with speed restrictions. **Frenchtown Pond State Park will be open for public use beginning this morning August 25, 2007.**

Rat Creek ¹ is located on the Beaverhead/Deerlodge NF, twenty-five miles west of Wisdom, MT. Quisenberry's Type 1 IMT (also managing the Rombo Mtn Fire) is assigned. The fire is now 19,300 acres with no report on containment. Personnel assigned: 198. Structures are threatened.

Jocko Lakes ¹ started on CSKT lands (Flathead Agency, BIA), twenty-six miles NE of Missoula; 8 miles W of Seeley Lake. Hoff's Type 1 IMT is assigned. The Jocko Lakes Fire is 34,980 acres and 38% contained. Personnel assigned: 1,039. Community of Seeley Lake, surrounding area, Pyramid Lumber Mill and cell tower are threatened. Structures (8) have been lost, including 1 primary residence and 7 outbuildings.

- Seeley Lake and all Seeley Lake Forest Service campgrounds and boat launches are open for public use at 8 a.m. today.
- Public tours of the helibase located at the Seeley Lake airport offered today from 1-3 p.m.

Sawmill Complex ¹ (4 fires) is located on the Lolo, Bitterroot and Beaverhead – Deerlodge National Forests. The four fires in this complex extend from approximately 22 miles SE of Missoula to an area approximately 23 miles WSW of Phillipsburg, MT. The complex acreage is 55,000 and includes the Sawmill Creek, Wyman #2, Fisher Point, and the Signal Rock 07 fires. Containment is 10%. McNitt's Type 2 IMT is assigned. Personnel assigned: 628. Numerous residences and other structures remain threatened. Use Restrictions and Road Closures are in effect within the Rock Creek drainage. **A community meeting is scheduled for 7:30 pm Sunday, August 26.**

Skyland is located on the Flathead NF near Summit. Heintz's Type 2 IMT is assigned. The Skyland Fire is 45,760 acres with 70% containment. Personnel assigned: 457. Two structures are confirmed lost, numerous residences remain threatened. Evacuations for all areas have been reduced to Level 1.

Rombo Mountain ¹ is located in the Bitterroot NF. The fire is located eighteen miles south of Darby, MT. Quisenberry's Type 1 IMT is assigned. Estimated size is 20,534 acres with no report on containment. Personnel assigned: 155. Residences, Painted Rocks State Park and other commercial property remain threatened. **Highway 93 and West Fork Road are open.** Existing Stage I Pre-Evacuation Notices/Alerts remain in effect. Also, the existing area closure order remains in effect. Maps and area closure descriptions are available at Forest offices, and on line at www.fs.fed.us/r1/bitterroot.

Ahorn Fire on the Lewis and Clark National Forest in Lewis and Clark County is being managed by Cowie's FUMT. Current size is estimated at 47,000 acres and is 10% contained. Personnel Assigned: 192. Structure protection for residences and guest ranches in the Benchmark, Gibson, and Sun River Canyon areas continue. **There will be a public meeting on Saturday, August 25th at 1:00 p.m. at the Augusta School.**

Fool Creek on the Lewis and Clark and Flathead National Forests, approximately 30 miles NW of Choteau. Fire is now 60,000 acres with 15% containment. Personnel assigned: 118. Cowies FUMT is assigned (also managing the Ahorn Fire). Several outbuildings, including a ski resort remain threaten (7 outbuildings have burned).

WH Complex – These fires are located 27 miles S of Livingston, and 10 miles SE of Emigrant, MT. Total size of the complex is 28,550 acres with 65% containment. Stanich's Type 1 IMT is assigned and will be transitioning with Bonefeld's FUMT. Personnel Assigned: 385. All evacuations are lifted. Area closures on the Gallatin NF remain in effect, but are being reduced in size today.

Brush Creek is located on the Flathead NF, twenty-five miles west of Whitefish, MT. Brush Creek is 29,921 acres with 90% containment. Estimated containment date is 8/26/07. Hill's Type 2 IMT is assigned. Personnel assigned: 489. Residences and outbuildings remain threatened.

BH* Fire is 36 miles southwest of Darby. Perkin's FUMT is managing the BH Fire (under the umbrella of the Bitterroot WFU Complex). The fire is 653 acres with no report on containment. Personnel assigned: 7. Cause: Lightning. Intermittent road closures are in place to fall snags.

Bitterroot Fire Use Complex ¹ (12 fires) is 15 air miles west of Darby. Perkins's FUMT is assigned. The Bitterroot Fire Use Complex is 16,821 acres. Personnel assigned: 45. Cause: Lightning. Structures are threatened. One structure was destroyed. Possible closure of the Magruder Corridor Road (24-48 hours) due to increased fire activity.

Chippy Creek is located forty-two miles southwest of Kalispell, and 24 miles N of Thompson Falls, MT (Northwestern Land Office, Montana DNRC). Bennett's Type 1 IMT is assigned. Size is 97,942 acres with 70% containment. Personnel assigned: 628. Numerous homes remain threatened. Residents along the Hubbard dam Road from the junction with the Niarada Road north to the Hubbard Dam subdivision were allowed to return home yesterday afternoon. The Hubbard dam road remains closed to the general public, because of fire traffic.

Pattengail Creek ¹ on the Beaverhead-Deerlodge NF, 10 miles NE of Wisdom. The Pattengail Creek Fire is 11,869 acres and 15% contained. Quisenberry's Type 1 IMT (also managing the Rombo Mountain and Rat Creek Fires) is assigned; with 46 personnel. 12 structures along Highway 43 (west side of the fire in the area of Doolittle Creek and Squaw Creek) are threatened.

Conger Creek ¹ on the Lolo National Forest, approximately 20 miles north of Ovando. The fire is now 20,050 acres, with no report on containment. Ahshapanek's (Type 3 IC) is assigned with 18 personnel. 13 outbuildings are threatened.

Railley Mountain on the Flathead NF is 15 miles northeast of Seeley Lake. (This fire was previously reported as a confined/contained incident.) Kamrud is assigned as the FUM1. The Railley Mountain Fire is 15,641 acres with no report on containment. Personnel assigned: 6. Seven (7) outbuildings are threatened. Cause: Lightning.

Corporal Fire is 18 miles east of Swan Lake on the Flathead NF. The Corporal Fire is 2,100 acres with no report on containment. Olson (Type 3 IC) is assigned. Personnel assigned: 14. Cause: Lightning. Structures at Spotted Bear are threatened.

Meriwether located on the Helena National Forest in and around the Gates of the Mountains Wilderness. Carpenter's Type 3 organization is assigned. Current size is estimated at 43,296 acres with 85% containment. Personnel Assigned: 72.

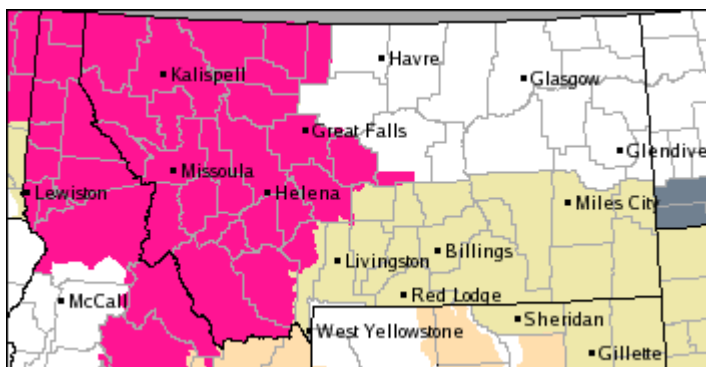
Calbick is located on the Flathead National Forest, approximately 20 miles South of East Glacier, MT. A Type 4 organization (Nichols) is assigned. Personnel assigned: 11. Cause: Lightning. The Fire is approximately 867 acres in size, with no report on containment. No structures are currently threatened, but structure protection measures (for 10 outbuildings) are continuing in the Schafer Meadows area.

*** NEW FIRES (Emerging Extended Attack Fires over 100 acres in size)**

III. Weather

Red Flag Warnings and/or Fire Weather Watches:

This morning the National Weather Service issued a **Red Flag Warning** for Fire Weather Zones 102 through 111. This includes the Kootenai NF, Flathead NF, Glacier National Park, Lolo NF, Confederated Salish and Kootenai Reservation, Bitterroot NF, Deerlodge NF and the Beaverhead NF.



The red flag warning remains in effect from 2 pm MDT this afternoon through 9 pm MDT this evening.

A dry cold front will move across north central Idaho and western Montana by early Sunday. Ahead of this front...an increased pressure gradient will result in sustained southwest and west winds of 15 to

- **State of Emergency.** The following jurisdictions have declared a state of emergency:

Lewis and Clark	Ravalli
Lake	Granite
Cascade	Missoula
Flathead	Sanders
Prairie	Beaverhead
Pondera	Blackfeet Nation
Sweet Grass	Park
Madison	Meagher
Powell	

- **Disaster Declaration.** The following jurisdictions have declared a wildfire disaster:

Teton	Gallatin
Glacier	Custer

VI. Jurisdictional Emergency Operations

- All Local Government / Tribal Emergency Operations Centers have been deactivated as of 8/25/07.
- Flathead County's Joint Information Center (JIC) remains open.

VII. Requests for State Financial Assistance

- N/A

VIII. Fire Management Assistance Grants

- Jocko Lakes FEMA-2718FM-MT approved 8/4/07
- Black Cat FEMA-2721FM-MT approved 8/16/07
- Ford Road FEMA-2723FM-MT approved 8/19/07

IX. Emergency Management Assistance Compact Resources Committed

- EMAC A-Team is assigned to the MT State Emergency Coordination Center.
- Two HEMTT aviation refuelers from Colorado National Guard are deployed to support the Montana Army National Guard.

X. Summary of State Resources Committed (through the SECC)

- MT-DES has two employees deployed with Incident Management Teams (through the Northern Rockies Coordination Center).

- Montana Army National Guard UH-60 Blackhawk modules are deployed for initial attack to:
 - Kalispell
 - Missoula
- One Montana Army National Guard CH-47 Chinook and module is deployed to assist with fire support on the Meriwether Fire.
- Montana National Guard Security Teams are currently assigned to:
 - Ahorn Fire
 - Sawmill Complex
 - Jocko Lake (2 teams)
 - Fool Creek Fire
 - Black Cat Fire (2 teams)
- Montana Highway Patrol resources are assigned (as requested) to assist in traffic control and law enforcement support of large fires.
- Starting on July 20, 2007, at 0700 hours, the SECC was staffed and activated to a Level III status with extended hours (0700-1900), seven days a week. The SECC remains at Level III. Outside of those hours, the MT DES staff Duty Officer is available 24 hrs and may be reached at (406) 841-3911.